

I knew that was the little sonovabitch. . ."

Before he agreed to go on CBS, Robert McKeown consulted with his old friend, Carlos Prio. After Castro's takeover, Prio had gone back to Cuba. But when Castro did not welcome him back into the echelons of power, Prio returned to exile in 1961 and became a spokesman for anti-Castro forces in Miami. Last April 5, Prio was found in his Miami Beach garage with a .38-caliber bullet in his chest. McKeown, contacted by telephone, had no comment.

He did, however, have something to say about George de Mohrenschildt. "He came to me one time. Long time ago." Why? "Well, that's something else. Just to ask me a few questions, that's all." Concerning Cuba? "No, Oswald." After or before the assassination? "Oh, before. No, after. No, before—goddamn, after. It's been so long." And what did he want to know? "Well, none of your business. I don't want to get all messed up in this."

## The Exile

For more than a year now, congressional investigators have been looking for a man with dark hair, deep lines across a high forehead, and sunspots below his blue eyes. He would be approaching sixty now. In 1963, he stood about 6-foot-2 and weighed close to 200 pounds, a stocky, soft-spoken man who wore expensive sportswear and liked to roam Latin America as if he owned it.

As late as 1972, the man still served a U.S. intelligence agency, almost certainly the CIA. The Philadelphia police, which did the composite that led to the capture of the Knight slayer, did a similar sketch for a Schweiker committee investigator who now works for the House. If the House can find him, he may contain the answer that McKeown and others hold only a piece of.

He was once the case officer for a violence-prone, CIA-supported Cuban exile faction called Alpha 66. As "Morris Bishop," he met continually with one of the group's Cuban founders over a 13-year period. They met everywhere from Chile to Las Vegas. They planned everything from Castro's assassination to the disruption of Bolivia's currency. One August afternoon in 1963, they met in the company of Lee Harvey Oswald.

That is the story told by a Cuban I will call "Carlos." We met twice in Miami hotel lobbies in 1976, where I agreed not to identify him for fear of retaliation against his life. Carlos estimates he met at least 100 times with "Morris Bishop"

in the early 1960s, first in Havana where, says Carlos, "Bishop had a fake passport from Belgium, and was able to enter whenever he pleased. He also spoke French very well." But in 1960, when Castro's secret police uncovered an early plot to fire a bazooka into the presidential palace, Carlos fled into exile in Miami.

Within weeks of Carlos' coming to the U.S., Bishop contacted him again. He had him organize a cadre of veteran revolutionaries who'd fought alongside Castro before turning against him when he turned to the Soviets. This became Alpha 66. After the Cuban Missile Crisis, says Carlos, Bishop set in motion the commando raids on Russian merchant

given me the address to a building, a bank or insurance company. This was in August 1963. There I met Bishop and Lee Oswald. I didn't know it was Oswald until November, when I saw the pictures on television. But the three of us walked to a cafeteria. Oswald was with us 10 or 15 minutes. He did not say one word. He was very quiet, very strange. Bishop then told Oswald, 'See you later' and Oswald left."

After the assassination, says Carlos, "the FBI contacted me to ask several questions. At first I was worried, but the agent who interviewed me said it was a matter of routine, nothing important. I didn't tell the agent anything, because I thought it would harm the movement."



**The U.S. intelligence agent, case officer for the violence-prone, CIA-supported Cuban exile faction, met continually with 'Carlos.' They planned everything from Castro's assassination to the disruption of Bolivia's currency. One August afternoon in 1963, they met in the company of Lee Harvey Oswald**

shipping in Cuban ports that would result in President Kennedy's crackdown on anti-Castro activities in 1963.

"Bishop believed that Kennedy and Khrushchev had made a secret pact to do nothing about Cuba. He kept saying Kennedy would have to be forced to make a decision, and the only way was to put him up against the wall. Three ships were attacked in different ports of Cuba. To further make Kennedy reach a point, we held a press conference in Washington to let him know about the commando groups."

Four months later, Bishop called Carlos to Dallas. "He had previously contacted me for other meetings in Dallas. When I arrived at the airport, he had

Carlos says he never asked Bishop about Oswald, "because Bishop always told me that in this type of work, you just do things, you don't ask." But in 1964, Bishop tried to induce him to offer Carlos' cousin—then one of Castro's top intelligence aides—a considerable sum to defect and to say that Oswald had contact with Castro agents.

"I asked Bishop if this was true. He said it did not matter, what was important was to get my cousin to make that statement. Bishop never brought up the topic again, and I never asked. I always thought that Bishop was trying to make a cover for himself. I believe Bishop was working with Oswald during the assassination. About six months later, I

*Dark Russian - first sent under a pseudonym*



Ruby, as documented by the Warren Commission. Indeed, according to McKeown, there was plenty he didn't say to CBS.

"One thing is," he says, "I knew that Cuban with Oswald from before. Knew him from Cuba. 'Cept he didn't know I knew. His name was Hernandez."

The intricate chain tying McKeown to the dramatic personae of the Kennedy assassination begins in Cuba in the mid-1950s. A mechanical engineer, McKeown had designed a new coffee-cleaning machine and opened offices in Havana under Fulgencio Batista. But when the dictator demanded his own

rades in arms, shipping them from Houston to Fidel Castro's revolutionary band in Mexico City. After the revolution, according to McKeown, Prio had a promise from Castro to resume the presidency. Besides McKeown, Prio enlisted a young mercenary named Frank Sturgis, other Cuban exiles and occasional aid from teamster-mafia interests. Then, in 1958, the FBI cracked down.

For his part in supplying illegal weapons, McKeown got six months in jail and a \$500 fine. Then, having done his time, he says he began receiving a stream of unusual visitors: Someone from Mexican intelligence, a CIA man who wanted him to check out a certain

er he says he's gonna give me \$25,000 for a letter of introduction to Castro, but he never did come up with the money."

Four-and-a-half years passed before Lee Oswald made a similar visit to McKeown's door. "I was married to a schoolteacher," McKeown remembers. "I'd divorced my wife right after all my trouble. Lived right on the water in a little town called Bay Cliff, right between Houston and Dallas. One Saturday morning—it was either August or the first of September, because my wife was gettin' ready to go back to school—about 11 o'clock, somebody knocked on the door. I'd heard this car stop out there, station wagon, and I seen these two guys get out. Real light color car, kinda pinkish. This guy driving it, the one I knew before, his name was Hernandez. This other guy said, 'My name's Oswald. Just call me Lee.' Then he says, 'I can see I got the right man.' I said, 'Whataya mean?' He says, 'Well, your name is McKeown, isn't it?' So I invited him in with this Spanish man, who was well-dressed, with a tie and everything, and Oswald he was in shirtsleeves. And Oswald commenced telling me, after he sat down, he said, 'Might as well get to the point. I want to know if you'd be interested in furnishing some arms. My contacts have a big opportunity to take over Salvador.'"

Salvador?

"Down in Central America. San Salvador. And I told him, I said, 'Now listen man, lemme tell you something. I'm on five years probation and I don't want no part of no kinda arms.' So Oswald kept talkin', kept talkin', says, 'Well, I know I got the right man and I know you can get me anything I want, can't you?'"

McKeown says he was adamant in his refusal, and the two departed. About a half-hour later, they returned. This time, Oswald offered \$10,000 for four .300 Savage semiautomatic rifles with telescopic sights.

"Oswald said, 'You're the man that run all the guns to Castro and got caught with the cache here in Houston, aren't you?' 'Yeah,' I says, 'but that's all in the past.' I told him I didn't want no part of this kinda business."

Still, says McKeown, Oswald persisted by telephone. "My wife was home alone and she tells me, 'Who in the hell was it calling you wantin' to know if you changed your mind yet?' I says, 'I don't know who it is.' I was tryin' to keep her from findin' out about my past. Then the FBI come to see me, same day as the assassination. Hell, I was scared. I didn't tell 'em nothin' about Oswald. But



**Robert Ray McKeown says that Jack Ruby came to him in 1959 to say that "his people were willing to give me \$15,000 to help get five people outta Cuba. And his people, he said, were the Mafia." Four-and-a-half years later, in the summer of 1963, another visitor to McKeown's door offered \$10,000 for four .300 Savage semiautomatic rifles with telescopic sights. His name was Lee Oswald**

\$5,000-a-month cut and McKeown refused, Batista confiscated the business. So McKeown came to Miami—and to the patronage of Dr. Carlos Prio Socarras.

The "Cuban Democracy" tenure of Carlos Prio (1948-1952) has often been described as the most corrupt in the island's history, a time when political gangs (and some American counterparts) ran rampant. In the end, Batista ousted him. But, as McKeown puts it, "Prio got out of Cuba with a helluva lotta money, and he didn't give a damn how he spent it either. I carried \$100,000 in cash in my goddamn inside coat pocket a lotta times."

The two of them became com-

Mexican, two Miami "intelligence officers" who wanted him to work closer with the Cubans on "something to do with cocaine." On January 3, 1959, as Castro marched into Havana, a Houston newspaper headlined: "Gunrunner Hails Castro Victory." A week later, a deputy sheriff dropped by. A man in Dallas was desperate to reach McKeown, "in a case of life and death."

The man was Jack Ruby. "He told me his people were willing to give me \$15,000 to help get five people outta Cuba. He mentioned some Jewish-sounding names, and a fella in Las Vegas. And his people, he said, were the mafia. That's what he called it, the mafia, but he never did mention no names. Lat-



brought up the topic about giving money to my cousin. Bishop said there was no need to talk about that plan any longer."

Around this same time, Carlos remembers being called to a meeting in Las Vegas. "We were in a hotel and Bishop left to do something. In his briefcase, I saw a memo with the plans we were doing, movements to contact, the activities of commando groups in Texas. The memo had the initials 'To HH.' There was a millionaire Hunt in Texas, very conservative. I thought, since Bishop was so right-wing himself, maybe he was in contact with the millionaire. Other times I think he works with Hughes. But this is all speculation."

The years passed. Years in Puerto Rico, infiltrating the Communist movement, posing as a sports promoter. Years in Bolivia, a \$30,000 banking specialist with the State Department, working to undermine a leftist government. Carlos' final mission for Morris Bishop was to organize the assassination of Castro, when he came to visit Chile in 1971.

"It was very similar to the assassination of Kennedy, because the person Bishop assigned to kill Castro was going to get planted with papers to make it appear he was a Moscow Castro agent who turned traitor, and then he himself would be killed. But the plan never got off the ground. We had TV cameras with machine guns mounted inside to kill Castro during his speech, but one agent had an appendicitis attack and we had to rush him to the hospital. The other agent said he wouldn't do it alone.

"After this," says Carlos, "a lot of differences began to come up. So many lives being lost, and nowhere."

On July 24, 1973, the Drug Enforcement Administration arrested him on a narcotics-dealing charge that he claims was "a set-up because of my previous activities." Two days later, Bishop paid him a cumulative salary of over \$150,000 for his 13 years of service to the CIA. And Bishop never contacted him again. Carlos served 17 months in the Atlanta Penitentiary. Immediately upon his release, the Church Committee contacted him—and he began to relate his history to them.

Last fall, Carlos was flown to Washington by Senate investigators and taken secretly to a meeting of the CIA's Association of Retired Intelligence Officers. It was hoped he might offer a positive identification of Bishop as David Atlee Phillips, recently retired agency veteran in Latin America and a close match for Carlos' description. But Carlos refused to say. The search for Morris Bishop goes on. ●

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